

'SCRIPTS

Newsletter of the DC Conscripts ASL Club: Issue #5, January 2004



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Words from the Conscript-in-Charge

John Slotwinski



How Do We Define Success?

Over five years later and the club is still a success. It's hard to believe. The five years is the hard-to-believe part, not the success part. It's nice to see that things are still going so well for the club. But how do we measure that success? Maybe it's the little things:

- The club is huge. We have 40 active members as evidenced by the club ladder where inactive players are removed regularly. Additionally there are countless people who just “stop by and watch” our meetings.
- The level of play in the club remains high. In the past five years we have had one Winter Offensive and one ASLOK winner. Another club member won DonCon the year before we formed. And in the last five years we have numerous top five finishes at DonCon and Winter Offensive.
- Good club meeting attendance with games played by many different players with many different levels of skill. New people showing up at many meetings. Five different, hard-fought club tournaments with five different winners.
- Outstanding relationships with the good people at Little Wars Gameshop and the Elkrigde Library.
- My own little ASL Padawan Bill Stoppel is all grown up now. A few years ago Bill started his ASL journey when he came to one of the club's newbie clinics. Now he's playing the big boys at big tournaments like DonCon. You're on your own now Bill, I don't have any other tricks left to teach you. May the Force be with you.

What Do We Attribute the Success to?

Measuring success may be hard, but attributing the success is easy. We're successful because of the membership. Good camaraderie, outstanding sportsmanship, and players who remember what playing the game is really all

(Continued on page 2)

The DC CONSCRIPTS ASL club serves all ASL'ers in the greater Washington D.C. area, including Northern Virginia and Maryland. Meetings are held once a month, alternating between Maryland and Northern Virginia sites. The Club also runs a yearly club tournament and maintains a club ladder. Players with all levels of interest and/or playing ability are invited to participate. Club information is available on-line at: <http://www.dcconscripts.org>

(Continued from page 1)

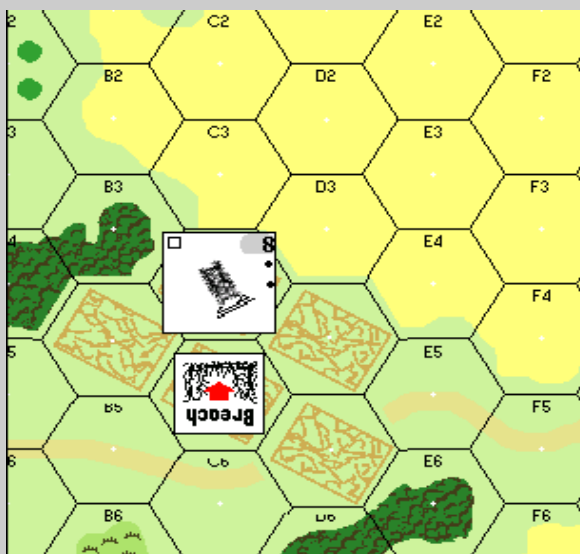
about. Newbies, average players, grognards. The people behind the scenes and the countless invisible hours that they put in for the club. Extra special kudos to Chris Baer for continuing to actually run the club while I continue to take the credit.

What's Next?

We still need to find a permanent Northern Virginia meeting location that meets the needs of the club members. Maintaining or even continuing to increase the membership would be great. And the good sportsmanship and camaraderie...let's continue those as well, the truest metrics of success for this club. Σ



I hate the line at the DMV...



Did You Know?

G8.8: In PTO environments, bulldozers can be used to breach paddy banks. Seriously. Pull out your chapter G and take a look yourself. What were the developers drinking when they came up with this? Are there actually any scenarios with both bulldozers and paddy banks?

dcconscripts.org



10-0



Washington DC Metro ASL Club

Conscripts: Advanced Squad Leader for the Masses

Commissar's Corner

Chris Baer



Channeling Bowie (David, not Maryland)

This past year will go down in the annals of club history as the year of “Ch-ch-ch-ch-changes,” as Sergeant Stardust might say. We gained a virtual home, lost a real home, and decided to shake up the tournament structure. It’s enough to make you see Spiders from Mars (and wonder what their turret armor factor is) . . .

The year started out unremarkably enough, with a typically strong club presence at Winter Offensive ’03 up in Bowie (Maryland, not David) and a good field of competitors for the fifth annual Club Tourna-

The year started out unremarkably enough. Everything was fine in Clubland. Then came the changes.

ment, which was run as it always had been, more or less. Everything was fine in Clubland. Then came the changes.

The first change was, I think, salutary for all concerned. After five years, the Conscripts Metro DC ASL Club staked a permanent claim on the Internet, registering its own domain name: <<http://www.deconscripts.org>>. Along with the new website ad-

dress came a site facelift and a professional hosting contract that gave us a real, honest-to-goodness mailing list, some serious bandwidth allocation (the better to send out all these newsletters), and plenty of server space. Previously, the club had relied on donated server space and bandwidth (and a tip of the samovar to Technical Conscript Wes Fleming for his assistance with newsletter hosting).

Because the website carries with it some costs, the club also started accepting monetary donations for the first time, a step that the Troika didn’t take lightly. Conscripts has always been conceived of as a dues-free organization, a “show up, sit down, and play” kind of group. It firmly remains our intention to keep the club free of dues or obligations of any kind—if we don’t get any donations (and our thanks to those of you who have donated), we’ll keep the club website and other club functions (like flyer and business card printing) going regardless. You can always just come, sit down, and play at a Conscripts meeting.



A secondary change resulting from the club website’s migration to a new server was the establishment of the Conscripts Mailing List, which can be subscribed to via the link at the club website or directly at: <http://deconscripts.org/mailman/listinfo/conscripts_deconscripts.org>. The “original” Conscripts mailing list had almost a hundred addresses on it, gathered over a seven-year span in conjunction with the dearly departed Commissar’s House Metro DC ASL News page I ran. Because I regard “opt-out” mailing lists as one of the Internet’s cardinal sins, there are many people from the original list who have not yet subscribed to the new Conscripts Mailing List. Come back to the fold, Conscripts. The list remains low-volume, is run off of our own server, and is easier to use than the last list by far.

Had you been a subscriber to the Conscripts Mailing List, you would have received early word of the biggest change to affect Clubland this year: the closing of Little Wars Game Shop in Fairfax in October. Since the early days of the Conscripts, we have met at Little Wars. It was truly a home to us. For five years, the owners, Faron and Alena Betchley, opened up early for us and stayed late to accommodate those Conscripts who just had to see if it were really possible to play a twelve-turn monster scenario in a day. The Conscripts rolled a lot of dice in that store, and it will be missed. We are currently in the process of evaluating several options for a new, permanent Northern Virginia meeting location for the club, and we welcome suggestions.

On the last day of group gaming at Little Wars, which was proudly occupied by the Conscripts, Conscript Second Class Jan Spoor presented a Proclamation to Faron and Alena declaring them Conscripts Emeritus, due all the rights and privileges of that rank. Jan also presented them with some 25mm Conscript miniatures he painted up. Our thanks to Jan for running the "Closing Ceremonies" for the Troika.

*A very warm "thank you" to
Faron and Alena for years of good
gaming. Our best wishes to them
in their future endeavors.*

And, on behalf of the entire club, a very warm "thank you" to Faron and Alena for years of good gaming. Our best wishes to them in their future endeavors.

One of the events that really packed the Conscripts into Little Wars was the annual Club Tournament. Because of the club's wide geographic spread, scheduling matches between opponents of similar record and ladder rank became an exercise in hair-pulling at times for your humble tournament director. Even when we switched, two years ago, to what amounted to a single elimination tournament, the bureaucratic overhead was excessive. So, in what we hope is the final big change of 2003, we have decided to alter the tournament structure yet again. If you thought a four-month, five round tournament was big, you ain't seen nothin' yet . . .

It is with some pleasure that the Troika unveils the Iron Conscript Tournament: ten rounds over ten months, January to October. Best ten-match record at the end wins. All matches will be self-scheduled between tournament participants, and in the event of a tie at the end, the person who has played the most different opponents takes the prize, with best combined ladder ranking of said opponents a secondary tie-breaker. Iron Conscript matches must be pre-designated as such, and while there is a general limit of one tournament match per month, you may play up to two month's worth of matches in advance to better schedule your gaming around such domestic silliness as vacations, jobs, weddings, and so on. Complete (and coherent) rules are available on the club website or directly at <<http://www.dconscripts.org/tournament04.html>>. The entry fee is \$5 again, with all proceeds turned into prizes, and we hope that all club members will participate. Do you have what it takes to be the Iron Conscript?

Fifth Annual Club Tournament Results

No Commissar's Corner is complete without a recap of the annual Conscripts Club Tournament. This year's edition featured thirty Conscripts dueling over five rounds, with the winners in each round advancing to face each other until only one remained to claim the fifth tournament title.

This year, after several years of very strong finishes, Bill Pittman defeated his nemesis, Mike O'Leary, in a tight match of G33 The Awakening of Spring (see the AAR in this issue of the newsletter) to take

the champion's crown. In the third-place match, Bill Stoppel edged Troika-member Doug Bush in A119 Showdown in Syria.

Additionally, Forrest Atterberry accepted a first round coin-flip loss with much equanimity to receive the Sportsmanship award this year, and Doug Bush picked the concealed Conscript squad out of a line-up of concealed first line and elite Soviet squads to claim the "thanks for playing" award.

The prize break-down was as follows:

1st Place:	Bill Pittman	5-0	(\$65 in Little Wars gift certificates)
2nd Place:	Mike O'Leary	4-1	(\$40 in MMP gift certificates)
3rd Place:	Bill Stoppel	4-1	(\$35 in Little Wars gift certificates)
Sportsmanship:	Forrest Atterberry		(\$10 in Little Wars gift certificates)
Pick-the-Script:	Doug Bush		(\$10 in Little Wars gift certificates)

Our thanks to Multi-Man Publishing and Little Wars for their donation of gift certificates to augment those we purchased using the tournament entry fees.

The District Commissar's Style Award went to Jan Spoor, for his thoughtful selection of beautifully gonzo scenarios during the tournament. He had quite a lot of competition this year and received for his efforts a pair of 36mm six-siders. (Next year's prize is a dice cup big enough for them.) Because even though dice don't equal style, it's important to have stylish dice . . .

Most Correctly,

Commissar Chris

Caption Contest

When I first saw the photo below I thought that the Sgt. was chewing out the private for his terrible panzer parallel parking job. Anyway, we're going to waive the club tournament fee to the club member who provides us with the funniest caption for the photo below. Please send your responses to john.slotwinski@nist.gov by January 31, 2004.



Counter Sorting — Style vs. Function

Bill Stoppel

Anytime you go to an ASL tournament one of the interesting things to notice is the vast array of counter sorting techniques that you will find. In a group of 100 different gamers you will probably find upwards of 50 different ways to store the counters. The Plano 3701 container seems to be the recognized “King” for counter sorting based on the sheer numbers of them you see. But, there is a seemingly endless variety of methods out there. Recently myself and another member of our ASL club (no names but his initials are Dr. John) abandoned our Plano 3701’s and made the big leap to, what we consider, the Rolls Royce of counter sorting: *Raaco*. While not very prevalent in the States *Raaco* is a very big player in counter sorting in Europe. This observation is made from looking at pictures of Euro-tournaments not from personal experience.

For the uninitiated who are wondering what the heck I am talking about, let me expound a little. *Raaco* makes a series of sorters that some have co-opted to use to sort and store ASL counters. It is produced in Denmark but still not sold in the United States. The great part about *Raaco* is that it is both functional and stylish. *Raaco* consists of sorter boxes that you can customize with various inserts/trays to modify it to meet your needs and tastes. These trays are fully removable so you can pull out just the ones needed for whichever scenario you happen to be playing at the time.

A few years ago Nick Edelstein had a webpage where he touted the aspects of *Raaco*. He would procure *Raaco* from his home in the U.K. and ship it across the pond to gamers in the U.S. This was a great service to U.S. gamers and was virtually the only way for us to obtain it. Sadly, Nick has had to close down shop and sells *Raaco* no more.

As far as what you will need to get started it is really up to you to decide that. I took the suggestions from Nick’s site and expanded and modified it to fit my own preferences. I recommend you get a pair of Handi-Boxes. This is a fairly recent addition to the *Raaco* line and well worth the money. These each will fit 4 PSC 5-01 sorter boxes. Each of the sorter boxes can fit an endless variety of trays. While Nick used 3 different trays (9-1, A75 and A78) I recommend going with just A75 and A78s. Each sorter box will fit 16 of these trays. The A75 tray has 5 compartments just the right size for your 5/8 inch counters. The A78 features 8 compartments of varying sizes and these are good for the bulk of your 1/2 inch counters.

As a general rule I use 4 or 5 A78s per box of nationalities with the rest made up of A75s. For the informational counters I use 8 of each type. I have my boxes broken out like this:

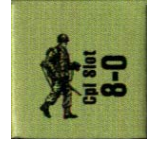
- Box 1: Instruction Counters (except DASL, HASL and SASL)
- Box 2: Germans (all except Waffen SS) and Finns
- Box 3: Waffen SS and Axis Minors
- Box 4: Russian and French
- Box 5: American
- Box 6: British
- Box 7: Italian and Allied Minor
- Box 8: Japanese, Chinese and DASL/HASL/SASL instructional counters

I have at least one copy of every AH, MMP, HoB and KE counter stored in these 8 boxes along with the Ethiopian and Eritrean counters from CH! I have found that the 8 boxes gives me plenty of room for all my counters and a good bit of room to expand as more is added to the system.

While not as easy to procure as other forms of counter sorting *Raaco* is well worth the extra effort. So if you have a friend in Europe that is willing to do a little shopping for you, you too can move up to the ultimate in counter sorting. Σ

Ten Questions with a Conscript: John Slotwinski

Interview Questions Provided by Chris Baer



1. What is the first wargame you ever played? Ever bought with your own money? Ever spent more than \$100 for? Ever threw away or sold and regret to this day?

Believe it or not my very first wargame was *Squad Leader*, which I got for Christmas when 11 or 12. I had heard about from a friend and begged for it. It was out of my league in terms of complexity, but I still had a blast with it. I don't think I ever played *SL/COI/COD/GI* completely correctly, especially since I didn't have any opponents, but it set a good foundation for my eventual ASL experience. I'll never forget that Christmas with my dad trying to playing the *Streets of Stalingrad* scenario with me even though he had no interest in it. Thanks dad! *Crescendo of Doom* was probably the first game that I bought with my own money.



Joe Jackson (L) and Paul Schill (R)

I think the first game that I spent more than \$100 for was Decision Game's *Totaler Krieg!* Others are The Gamer's *This Hallowed Ground* and L2's *Streets of Stalingrad*. All of these have been worthy investments. I don't think I've ever thrown away or sold a game.

2. What is the attraction of board wargaming over other forms of gaming -- miniatures, computer, role playing, Euro/German -- for you? And which other form or forms occupy your attention, if any?

Getting to blow things up? I'm not sure if I can pinpoint it exactly. I like the historical components of simulating certain units and weapons that were in use, and being given the chance to relive and possibly change history. Playing wargames on historical maps is part of this

allure for me. Many wargames also have really nice components, although the Euro and German games have these now as well.

Some PC games are a nice distraction for me. They provide the immersive visual and auditory environment that you can't recreate while playing board games. My favorites are *Battlefield* (PC) and *Medal of Honor* (Gamecube). The big problem I have with PC games is that they don't have the social aspect that you get in FTF wargaming. There is also something that I like about wargames' tactile nature; it's nice being able to pick up pieces, stack them and move them around a bit. You don't get that with a computer screen and keyboard.

I've dabbled in minis a little bit and hope to use them to eventually lure my son into the world of wargaming. I actually like painting them (on the ultra-rare occasions when I have time) and have found it to be very therapeutic. Some Euros are cool too and once in while I'll play these with the family or friends.

For the most part, roleplayers, unlike wargamers, are just too weird for me. The closest I get to roleplaying is playing a good hand of *Mutchkin* with my ASL buddies.

3. What inspired you to found the Conscripts ASL Club, and what do you find most rewarding about working with the club?

Inspiration is easy when your survival is at stake! Seriously, it was August of 1998 and immediately following DonCon Avalon Hill announced that they were selling out to Hasbro. The future of ASL was very uncertain at that point, and I wanted to make sure that there was still a solid pool of future local players even if there wasn't any corporate support or new products. So I sent out an electronic call-to-arms to a bunch of local players in the DC/MD/Northern VA area to see if they would be interested in forming a club. The response was overwhelming and the rest is history. Our club now has one of the largest rosters of active players in the country. And we have some

of the best players too as evidenced by our performances at DonCon, Winter Offensive, ASLOK, etc.

For me, one of the most rewarding things about working with the club is that we have a great bunch of guys who still regularly come to the meetings. Five years later we're still going strong! Can you believe it's been five years already? A lot of the credit for this goes out to the club members themselves, and the various people who have worked hard for the club behind the scenes...people like Chris Baer, Tom Meier, Doug Bush, John Appel and probably some others who I can't recall right now. These guys have done a lot of the grunt work that is invisible to Joe Club Member and without their help the club wouldn't be as successful as it is today.



4. What do you see as the benefits (and drawbacks) of playing ASL in a competitive venue -- either in a tournament or in a club ladder structure?

For me the nice thing about competitive play is that I get a chance to see how I match up against the best players in the game, especially in a tournament situation where you have players coming from all over the country, or world in some cases. It's nice to see how my play has improved (or regressed) over the years. Our club ladder is a nice friendly way to put a little pressure or wager on a friendly match. But really it's only for local bragging rights.



You go first. No thanks, after you.

Unfortunately, over the years, I've found a couple of people, and it's really just one or two, who take competitive play WAY too seriously. For me the BEST thing about ASL is the social aspect. There are a couple guys who I've met that I wouldn't play anymore because they take the game so seriously that they'll do anything to win, including being dishonest, or sometimes even exhibiting border-line cheating. And they whine like mad. It's no fun at all to play them. Fortunately there are only a VERY few of these guys and most people know who they are. It's interesting to note that even the very best

players in the country, and I'm talking about people like J.R. Tracy, Kevin Valerian, and Paul Sidhu, know that the game is supposed to be fun and act like true gentlemen when you play them.

5. How has working on the design/development side of the ASL equation, with the Operation Veritable Historical Study, changed your relationship to ASL as a player, if at all?

I still consider myself primarily a player, and there is no question that as a player I really appreciate more all of the time and effort it takes, behind the scenes, to develop, playtest, and produce a quality ASL product in the MMP fashion. If you haven't been part of that process I don't think you can completely understand that.

6. Describe your gaming "space" -- table, storage, accoutrements. What's your dream setup for a gaming space?

I'm pretty lucky in that with my family's recent move I finally *have* my dream setup. I have a large dedicated room in the basement, complete with two huge 4'x8' tables (one for long-term games, and one for shorter games)

and lots of shelf space. The room has heat and air conditioning too! The only problem is that I live way out in the boonies so I don't have any regular FTF opponents. But I am able to host large weekend groups (up to 8) and have done so on occasion. I'll keep hosting and feeding people as long as they keep making the trek!

7. What is the most memorable experience you have of playing an inspired and tactically sound match and still losing?

Probably losing as the Japanese in *White Tigers* against Chris Chapman. I think the IJA really are the underdogs in this one, but I had a pretty good plan going in and I stuck to it all game. The end of the game came down to control of one pivotal building, which became mine when Chris moved his Gurka squad out of the building. That was the last building I needed to win, so I was surprised by this move. But in the advance phase he advanced his dudes right back in, took me out in CC, and managed to stay alive by one pip on the dice. So building control reverted back to him and he won. Chris and I have had many VERY close games over the years. When we played the KGP II CG the entire CG was decided by a single pip on the dice during the last possible turn. My heart can't handle many more games like that.

8. Which mapboard (geomorphic or historical) is your favorite, and why?

For historical boards I think that the Red Barricades map is still the best. It really portrays the character of the shattered factory district. And it just feels right being able to play the *Commissar's House* scenario on the historical terrain instead of on approximate geomorphic boards that really don't do the terrain justice. There are several geomorphic boards that I really like. Board 45 is probably my favorite urban board. For PTO I really like board 47, the jungle/valley board, and my favorite new board is probably the urban-to-rural transition board number 49.

9. Do you have any dice superstitions, counter alignment quirks, or other gaming habits you wouldn't admit to except in the understanding company of fellow gamers who feel your pain?

Oh I have several. I try to use a colored die that matches the nationality that I'm playing. So green for Americans, black for SS, yellow for Japanese, etc. I also like to have my counters face me, except that I rotate each counter/stack 90 degrees after I've moved them. I rotate them back as they advance. That way I can easily see who has moved and who hasn't. I also like to have the ordinance smoke counters face the player who placed it. That way it's easier to remember whose smoke is whose when it's time to flip or remove them in the prep phase. When you are as old as me you need tricks like this to keep track of everything. It's nice to see that some other people in the club have started using these tricks as well.

10. If Enrico Fermi, George Lucas, and Matt Groening all posted a "game wanted" message to the Conscripts Mailing List on the same day, to whom would you respond first, which scenario would you recommend, and why?

George Lucas, no question. We would play *Dead of Winter* to get that proper *Hoth* feel. Σ



DC Conscripts 2003 Club Tournament

Final Round AAR: *The Awakening of Spring* (G33)

Bill Pittman

Mike O'Leary and I squared off for the second year in a row in the finals of the Club tournament. Last year, Mike came out on top in a playing of *The Slaughterhouse* (J33) and this year I was looking to turn the tables. Based on the tournament round theme of 50 TK factors, we looked at several meaty armor scenarios before settling on *The Awakening of Spring* (G33). This is a 10-turn late war German attack on a Russian position with both OBs containing lots of REALLY REALLY heavy metal! We diced for side, low roll got the Krauts, and I tossed snakes!



The playing area is four boards long, the Germans set up on board 11 and the Russian on-board force sets up inside a road net on boards 16 and 17. The Germans have a choice of two VCs and must pick one prior to set-up. The choices are exit 36 EVPs off the east edge of board 4, or score 20 more CVPs than the Russians. I played for the EVPs. Russians receive significant reinforcements on turn three along the board 4 edge that the Germans must exit through. Having attended the 2002 World Boardgaming Championships, Mike was aware of a balance provision that prevents the Germans from exiting prior to turn four, and we incorporated that. Finally, just for fun, there's *Falling Snow*.

The German OB is all SS and is broken into two large groups that must set up on both halves of board 11. Each SS force consists of 8 squads plus leaders and SWs, for a total of 16 squads. There is a 9-2 leader. The real meat of the OB is the armor support; 2 King Tigers, 2 Tiger Is, 4 Panthers, and 2 Jadgpanzers! (Although it appears that this scenario slightly favors the Russians, who could pass up a chance to play that combination of AFVs!) The on-board Russian force consists of 3 468s, some 447s, and some leaders, including two 9-1s, some SWs, a HMG, and an infantry Mortar. In addition, the Russians get an 85L ATG and a 100L ATG just to keep the Kraut tanks honest! For reinforcements, the Russians receive 6 more 468s, 3 IS-2ms, and 3 SU-100 Assault Guns!!

Mike set up the Russians in a hedgehog on the Russian left, forward of the board 17 village. The ATGs were HIP, and there were no visible Russians on 2/3 of the front the Germans had to approach. Seeing this, I set up one SS group on the far German left, and the second group as far to the left as allowed, planning to get both groups together as quickly as possible. There is a walled farm on board 16, and my plan was to take up position there and see if I could draw fire from any HIP ATGs. I avoided Riders, as there seemed to be plenty of time to get the infantry up, and I didn't see the need to give the Russians a squad plus an AFV if the ATGs started scoring hits.

Right away the *Falling Snow* intensified, adding an extra LV Hindrance, and the Germans stepped out. Not much shooting from the Russians across the fields. I began pushing squads across the open ground north (left) of the walled farm, trying to draw ATG fire, but no luck. (This is one of those situations that calls for extreme patience on the part of the gunners, and Mike is just the guy to hold his fire...) I moved some infantry into a patch of woods on the north edge of board 16. German tanks began to cautiously advance out onto the plain, a Tiger I took up a hull down position in the walled farm and began shelling the tree line occupied by the Russians. SS squads behind the 'hedge of death' as Mike called it began shooting across the fields and scoring some minor hits. The Russian mortar took a crack at a Ti-

ger I and squad armored assaulting, but missed. On his turn, seeing what I was up to, Mike began pulling out of the woods and taking up positions in the village. I scored a couple of hits but since he was falling back anyway, they had no real affect, except when I broke his mortar crew.

On turn two, the Germans continued their advance across the open ground north of the farm. Several squads moved freely into cover. I began to think he didn't have an ATG in position on his right. The infantry in the woods on the north edge of board 16 decided to take advantage of the apparent safety and bolted for cover further east on board 17. I had fully intended to search these woods thoroughly with this squad, but didn't. I even ran a couple of Panthers up and took positions behind a

wall on board 17 north of the village. Covered by his brother in the farm, the second Tiger I moved up the center of board 16 and stopped near the barn. At this point, Mike revealed the 100L ATG, which was in the woods just evacuated by the Russian infantry, and fired, but missed. Seeing this, I advanced a King Tiger up and turned to face the 100L. Other AFVs and infantry continued the advance. On Russian turn two the 100L found its mark and knocked out the Tiger I. It then changed CA and IFed at the King Tiger, hit, but bounced. Russian infantry consolidated their position in the village. During DF, successful shots from the German 9-2 directed MMG and the King Tiger eliminated the 100L crew.

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German turn three saw more hurried movement east towards the exit edge, especially as the snow had stopped, taking away part of my cover. The bulk of the infantry was through the open ground, some making it into the woods across board 16, and some advancing on the woods the Russians had vacated. Thinking I was relatively safe, the King Tiger in the middle of board 16 restarted, and Mike revealed the 85L, which was hidden in the north woods I had failed to search on turn two. It promptly scored a rear shot and the King Tiger was gone! Mike had waited until I moved most of my infantry before revealing the gun, but there was one squad and leader stack under a Jadgpanzer he hadn't noticed, and I ran these over to the ATG. He held his fire. I began moving another AFV and he IFd, rolled 11 and malf'd the gun. I eliminated the crew in CC. A large orchard on board 17 to the northeast of the village became the assembly point for my remaining armor. On Russian turn three the armor reinforcements came on and took up positions which appeared to cover every avenue the Germans had to get from the orchard to the exit edge. His reinforcing infantry established another hedgehog in some woods on the north end of board 4. Seeing Mike's deployment, including an IS-2m hull down in the board 4 farm with a LOS all the way across board 17, caused my first PM [*Personal Morale—ed.*] check.

In hindsight, I moved east too quickly, thinking I could get in a good position to exit before the Russian reinforcements arrived. This was unrealistic. Not only was my armor bottled up now, but also I had lost one King Tiger needlessly. My only consolation was that I had only lost two AFVs to the ATGs. After playing this scenario, I can see where the Kraut will be hard pressed to win if those guns take out 3 or 4 AFVs, which they are quite capable of doing.

On German turn four, the infantry continued to advance, some into the woods east of the armor assembly point, others, including the 9-2, into the village. After conferring on the radio, the German armor commander ordered the Jadgpanzer platoon to join up with the Tiger I from the walled farm and take the road south and move to the other side of the village. I now had 4 Panthers and the King Tiger in the orchard north of the village, and the 2 Jadgpanzers and Tiger I moving west and south of the village. I was looking for any way to try and breakup the positions the big Russian armor had taken up. Mike didn't immediately react to this armor movement however, and very little fighting occurred this turn.

The snow started falling again on turn five as the armor feint continued to the south. Skirting the village completely, I moved into another board 17 orchard south of the town, with a Jadgpanzer taking up a hull down position behind a wall. The northern armor held position. The infantry in the board 17 woods to the east began to maneuver along the north edge of board 4, making for the exit edge to the east. Eventually, 5 squads, an 8-1 and an 8-0 would take this route. This north edge route was 7 hexes from the Russian infantry hedgehog on board 4, and falling snow greatly facilitated this movement. The 9-2 led infantry began to infiltrate the village, exchanging fire with Russians. Mike started up an IS-2m and an assault gun and moved them south to interdict my armor feint. Russian infantry in the board 4 hedgehog began to shift position to try and interdict my board edge creep.



Mike O'Leary (L) and Roni Hourihane (R)

The snowfall intensified on turn six and the German armor began to move, but not very far. In the north, I debated sending a Panther to join the south feint, but in the end all five tanks moved about five hexes forward, two Panthers were stacked in motion in one hex tucked out of Russian LOS, and one Panther and the King Tiger were lined up for a dash through a gap in the woods. In the south, the three tanks also moved about five hexes forward, all just out of LOS of the two Russian AFVs which had moved into the area. Fighting continued in the village and a Russian 9-1 broke, he would later be shot down like a dog for Failure to Rout! My infantry continued its board edge

creep, taking some fire but generally advancing. Mike decided on his turn six to take BFF shots with some of the Russian armor. Two tanks in the north and the two tanks in the south all moved slightly forward, took bounding fire shots at various German AFVs, but scored no hits. Return fire from German tanks was equally unsuccessful, and the Russian tanks returned to their general starting positions. Although they were low odds shots, they had a chance, and if Mike had hit once or twice, it would have been significant. A German hero was created in the board 4-edge group. Russian infantry in the village began falling back onto board 4.

Turn seven and it was time for the German armor to make its charge. In the south, the Tiger I moved a full movement allowance toward the exit edge, a double hedge line preventing its exit. Mike held his fire. Next, one of the Jadgpanzers, with its 15 movement, dashed toward the exit. Mike fired and missed and it was off, my first EVPs. The second JgPz followed his mate, Mike fired, malf'd the gun, and another exit, doubling my EVPs! In the north, the first Panther dashed through the gap, Mike fired, hit, burning wreck. Next came the King Tiger, but instead of making for the board edge, it turned toward the Russian armor, stopped, bounding fired, missed, restarted, and was missed in return by an IS-2m. A second Panther raced through the gap, bypassed the burning wreck, and was fired on, but the SU-100 malf'd its gun too! At this point, I should have continued east, but I turned the PzV north, and Mike rotated the turret of his last tank, fired and hit, two Panthers gone. The last two Panthers made their dash through the gap unscathed, but did not have enough movement to exit the board. One Panther could have made it with an ESB of two, but it would have been an 8 or better to immobilize

Mike almost failed his PM at this point; he had to leave the room for a minute. 50% of his armor reinforcements had boxed their MAs. That was tough. He makes up for it when I try to exit the last Panther and he nails it.

compared to his TH number against a moving target next turn. I decided to leave the Panther on board and make him commit a tank to attack it. Besides, he might miss! A squad and the 8-0 leader also exited the map this turn, bringing my EVP total to 19, 17 to go. On his turn, Mike failed to repair either malf'd gun, and Russian armor moved into position to try an interdict any further exits by German AFVs. I rolled a 6 on a couple of PF checks. Three Russian tanks moved on my two Panthers, and his third BFF shot was snakes, turning one into a burning wreck! Three Russian squads and a leader converge on the King Tiger in motion. All pass their PAATCs, he needs 3 to kill, 4 to immobilize, gets a 4.....ARRRGHHHH.....PM check number two.....if he hadn't malf'd two MAs in the preceding player turn, I might have failed it. His last SU-100 moved adjacent to my Tiger I in the south, but he missed his BFF.



Open gaming at Little Wars

German turn 8 and going for broke. One Russian tank is recalled. First move, the Tiger I turns toward the exit edge, the SU-100 fires, MALF's!!!! The Tiger exits for 7 more EVPs, total now 26. Mike almost failed his PM at this point; he had to leave the room for a minute. 50% of his armor reinforcements had boxed their MAs. That was tough. He makes up for it when I try to exit the last Panther and he nails it. (Although all the German AFVs have good CS numbers, I never got a crew from any wreck). Under cover of the hero, and a squad with a MMG, three more squads and the 8-1 exit along the board edge bringing my EVP total to 34, 2 to go. One squad advances into the last hex on board 4. I have a squad in a woods hex three hexes from the board edge, and a squad adjacent to two of his tanks and three hexes from the edge. He must get them all this turn. He repairs one MA and recalls another tank. Two of his tanks exit the map. An IS-2m begins moving in the direction of my squad right on the board edge, and one of my squads Pins on a PF check. He moves adjacent to my hero who has a PF, fires, and BAM, blows the turret off the IS-2! The next Russian tank succeeds in getting all the way into my hex, but he must ESB, and he fails, immobilizing in the hex. He tries to overrun my pinned squad with a third tank, misses, and remains in the hex. In the AFPh, Russian infantry rolls snakes and breaks my squad in the woods! Of the three German squads, one's broken, one's pinned in a hex with his tank, and the third is in CC with an immobilized tank! It's the CC phase, Mike points out that I can either attempt to withdraw or take him on. Despite having a Bryan Kropf angel on one shoulder and a Wayne Hadady devil on the other (or was it vice versa?!), I make a decision to attempt Withdrawal off the map, Mike misses the immobilized tank's melee attack, and the last 2 EVPs exit successfully! German win.

It's hard to tell which side has the upper hand in this one. It seems that the German should play for EVPs, not CVPs. If too many German AFVs get knocked out early, there's no way to recover, and if those big ATGs get lucky, it can be over in a couple of turns. The Germans can move more slowly than I did, there's plenty of time to search around for the ATGs. The balance provision of preventing German exit before turn 4 is a must; otherwise it's a mad dash. As usual, Mike's deployments constantly foiled my plans; his ability to maneuver units is the strongpoint of his play. The intensely falling snow and high German morale kept the board 4 edge creep feint viable, which was ultimately the difference. Mike's rolls were on the extremes, he either hit or broke his Gun, he rarely just plain missed. The last MA malf against the Tiger I was key. All in all, a great game of ASL for the Club Championship! Σ

What Kind of ASL Player am I?

Marc Genberg

With so many things to do in our hectic lives, how do we manage to even have a hobby such as ASL? Let's see what's on my "to do" list. Besides the daily grind of work, I've got to replace some molding in the kitchen (not mold, mind you). There's some outside work that needs to be done. My desk is a mess. I have some phone calls to return, some email to write. Don't forget to exercise. Plus keeping up with the ASL mailing list seems like a task in itself.

I missed our last Conscript's club meeting. And the one before that – I was out of town. I did make half of the annual tournament dates, which is better than last year. I think the last game of ASL I played was 4 months ago or so. So am I really an ASL player?

I think about that question from time to time. I have all of the modules. I own all of the Journals and thanks to eBay I own all of the various Annuals too. I have a notebook full of articles. I've purchased lots of third party stuff. So with many large notebooks full of materials, and 3 storage tubs full of parts and pieces, am I merely a collector?



I think about that too. I seem to collect lots of ASL stuff and not really play it all that frequently. I think about making it to tournaments – I did make it to one Winter Offensive and I also went to an AvalonCon back when they were still around. Sometimes, I wonder if all I do is *collect* ASL stuff, why do I even do that? Am I less of a player because I don't really *play* all that much? Should I just sell all my stuff on eBay and buy a new car (or pay off the one I already have)?

*I am not less of an ASL player
because I play less.*

I submit to you, dear reader, that I am not less of an ASL player because I play less. I may not be a very good ASL player. I may not ever get around to playing all of those hundreds of scenarios I have collected over these many years. But I accept that. I can dream about the day when I have nothing much else to do but ASL; the day when I can have a simultaneous campaign of Red Barricades and Blood Reef: Tarawa. But until then, I'll have to be content putting a few more counters away into their Plano locations, filing away a few more scenarios, and looking forward to the next module and days of dice rolls. Σ

LATW—A Brief Overview

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Adaptation by John Slotwinski

Introduction...

When war broke out in 1939, no country was prepared to supply its infantrymen with adequate means of defending themselves against tanks. At the time, the Anti-Tank Rifle was the only available weapon and it was far from perfect. It usually had long barrels, fired single rounds only and could penetrate about 25mm of armor. The ammunition was solid and was designed to propel weight against the armor at sufficient speed to penetrate it. This became obsolete as tanks with heavier armor were produced.

This article addresses a couple basics of shape-charged weapons in general, and several specific ASL version of these weapons in particular. This article is adapted from several shorter articles originally published in the *Front Line Dispatch* newsletter.

Barbarossa...Kharkov...Kursk...

These names bring up images of tanks rolling across plains and fierce battles taking place on scales that are impossible to grasp. Visions of men, in numbers never seen before hurling themselves at one another with death and destruction all around come to mind. You cannot think of the Eastern Front without these images. And certainly you cannot think of it without seeing the tanks, the many thousands of tanks engaged in battle. But of all the images you would see, there is one that would be missing—the Russian Anti-Tank Rocket.

Impossible, you say to yourself. Surely the Red Army, facing innumerable Panzers, would have, in their arsenal, a rocket-propelled weapon? It was not to be. Although the United States would lend some bazookas in 1943, the Soviet infantryman would have to stare down a Panzer with only an ATR. Russia's own research led them to reconsider earlier positions that the German armor was too thick to defeat by handheld weapons. The result was the Russian anti-tank rifle. One model produced was the PTRD-1941 anti-tank rifle. It was a single shot weapon, firing an armor-piercing bullet. It weighed about 38 pounds and was just over 78 inches in length. It was designed and first fired in about a month's time. [1] Its effectiveness against tanks is up to some discussion. It was known to pierce the armor of many tanks, oftentimes without disabling them. In other situations it would not pierce the armor, but instead could be used against the tank's openings and soft spots as a means to delay the vehicle. The weapon was not used exclusively against tanks. When opportunity permitted, it was also used against armored cars, personnel carriers, bunkers and other fortifications. Although not the weapon of choice, it did have some utility on the Eastern Front battlefield. Here's your rifle, now go take out that tank!



Help is on the way...

Prior to the war, America developed a grenade that could pierce 100 mm of armor. However, it had to be placed directly on the target, so it was not that useful. Then, a Col. Skinner thought of placing one of these grenades on the front of an experimental rocket launcher. It worked and the first LATW of its kind was born. In late 1942, the

M1A1 Rocket Launcher was introduced. It was a Light Anti-Tank Weapons in World War II “All told, WWII saw major developments in the use and deployment of Light Anti-Tank Weapons. The Bazooka, Panzerfaust and Panzerschreck served as forerunners to today’s LATW, staples of the modern-day battlefield.” 4ft tube from which 60mm rocket grenades would be launched. It was dubbed the “bazooka” due to its resemblance to the musical instrument of similar shape. It was later supplemented by the M9 and M9A1. They were longer, heavier but able to penetrate about 120mm of armor. The effective range of these weapons was about 300m for soft targets and 100m for hard ones. The playing field was leveled a bit, but taking out a Panzer was still a very dangerous game.

Bazookas are effective weapons in ASL against AFV’s and are liberally supplied in many scenarios. Proper use of them can be a means of leveling the field of play when lacking AFV’s on your side. The Bazooka is printed on half inch counters and thus is a support weapon (SW). Consequently it can be carried and used by any unbroken Infantry MMC or any combination of two SMCs at a cost of 1PP. Leadership modifiers may be applied to modify its To Hit DR, but only if the leader is not the one using the weapon. The development of the bazooka during WWII is represented on the counter by the number after the BAZ reference. These numbers (43, 44 and 45) represent the year in which it was used on the battlefield. Observe these designations carefully as they impact the strength of the

From the ASLRB:

13. Light Anti-Tank Weapons (LATW)

13.1. LATW: The term LATW includes all ordinance weapons represented by SW-size counters whose main use is against armor. LATW include ATR, ATMM, Bazooka, PIAT, PF/PK, and PSK. All LATW ordinance must first secure a hit vs armor on the appropriate To Hit Table (C3) before resolving that hit on the applicable To Kill Table. All Firer and Target Hit Determination DRM applicable to LATW are listed on the To Hit Table and marked with a red “L.” However, all LATW firing during the AFPh [EXC: Opportunity Fire] are subject to a +2 To Hit DRM (Case C3). LATW may never use the Area Target Type.

weapon. Interestingly, Bazookas have their own To Hit Tables listed on the back of the counter. This table is used for armored and unarmored targets. Looking closely at them, you will observe that the firer must be dangerously close to the target to be effective. For instance, their maximum range is five hexes and you really need to be closer than that to have a good chance of hitting the target. In addition to that, all firer (C5) and Target (C6) Hit Determination DRM apply. Once an AFV is hit, the attack is resolved on the C7.33 HEAT to Kill table. You would use either the BAZ 42 or BAZ 44+ column, depending on the time frame of the scenario. Bazookas can also be used against Infantry as HEAT, but only if they are behind a wall or in a building/rubble/pillbox (C8.31). The attack against Infantry is resolved on the 8 column of the Infantry Fire Table (IFT)(C13.43). Like all support weapons, the bazooka can malfunction. If the To Hit DR is > or = to its X# (printed on the counter), it is permanently removed from play.

Two can play that game...

The Germans, while producing some of the best tanks around, were surprisingly deficient in anti-tank warfare on this level. That is until 1943 when they got their hands on a bazooka. How this happened is open to debate, but many point to either captured weapons in North Africa or the interception of a shipment to Russia. In any case, they got one and developed it for their own purposes. To increase capacity and range, the caliber was increased from the bazooka’s 6 mm to 8.8 mm. The effective range, although in debate, was generally found to be 100 m to 230 m for moving targets and up to 400 m for static ones. [2] The Germans generally produced two different models of LATW. The first was the Panzerfaust (meaning ‘armored fist’). Rather than being fired from a rifle muzzle, the grenade had its own disposable launch tube. Therefore it was a single shot weapon. Like all of its counterparts, it had a serious backblast area of about 6-10 feet. The second model was the Panzerschreck (or “tank terror”). Deadlier than its counterpart in America, its maximum effective range was said to be 120 m to 150 m. It was reusable and almost identical in shape to the bazooka. All told, WWII saw major developments in the use and deployment of Light Anti-Tank Weapons. The Bazooka, Panzerfaust and Panzerschreck served as forerunners to today’s LATW, staples of the modern-day battlefield.

Panzerschrecks (PSK) in ASL

Panzerschrecks (PSK) are the German equivalent of the American Bazooka in ASL. Therefore all of the rules applying to the BAZ apply here as well with one main distinction. The PSK does not fire White Phosphorus (WP). It

too has its own To Hit Table printed on the back of the counter and has an IFT effect of 12 (C8.31). It resolves vehicular hits on the PSK column of the C7.33 Heat to Kill Table. It is available starting in 1943.

Panzerfaust? A Definite Maybe!

The Panzerfaust is an interesting character in ASL as it is only a potential weapon for German Squads. Why only potential? Let's take a look. First, only German infantry involved in scenarios after September 1943 have the opportunity of using this weapon. Therefore it has no representative counter. Reflecting the actual timing of development and use of the LATW in Germany, it is not available in earlier scenarios. Second, only all good order (and berserk) German Infantry can attempt a PF Check. They do so by making a dr. If the dr is 1-3, the unit has a PF and the opportunity to use it. Roll > or =4 and the unit may have one, but cannot use it at that time. Roll an original 6 the unit has no PF and is now pinned. If already pinned, it now is broken. Third, squads can only make a PF Check as long as it has not used up its SW usage capability. The PF Check dr can only occur during a friendly fire phase. And even if it fails, it counts as SW usage (A7.35). Development of the PF historically is reflected several ways in ASL. It is represented by the PF dr modifiers. Aug-Sept 1943 gets you a +1 drm, 0 drm from Oct 43 to Dec 44, and a -1 drm for any scenario in 1945. (There are other DRM so make sure to check rule C13.31.) Historical development is also reflected in the range allowed. Prior to June '44, the PF has a range of 1. Two hexes are allowed after that until Dec '44. Three hexes are permitted after that. Since there is no counter, the basic TH# (10) of a PF/PFk attack is modified by a -2 for each hex of range to target. So if you are 3 hexes away (it's post Dec '44) the modified TH# is 4. Other TH DRMs also apply. Increases in production numbers during the war is also taken into consideration. Up to 1944 the Germans receive 1 PF shot per German squad equivalent in their order of battle. This is increased to 1 ½ PFs per squad equivalent in 1944 and 2 PFs per squad equivalent in 1945. The use of the weapon was not without risk. The range of the weapon in WWII improved from 30 m initially up to 150 m by war's end. This meant that the user had to be very close to the target to be effective. Any takers? ASL takes this danger into consideration as well by adding the risk of casualty reduction if the TH DR is 12 (11 or 12 for inexperienced Infantry – C13.36). Since it was a single shot weapon, breakdown and repair rules do not apply. In the end, ASL incorporates the use of this tank-killer, but your opportunity of actually using it is never guaranteed, and always involves some risk.

Say ole chap, have you a Piat?

The British PIAT, or Projector, Infantry, Anti- Tank device is also found in ASL. It was first available in 1943 after three years of development. It was also referred to as "The Boys," being named after a Captain with the same name (who incidentally died before the start of the war). It fired a large caliber rifle round at high velocity. In ASL, the Piat is a SW. It too has its own To Hit table printed on the back of the counter. Hits against armor are resolved on the PIAT column of the C7.33 Heat to Kill Table. The PIAT has some unique rules to be observed. It cannot be fired at a target 1 or more levels lower in the same or adjacent hex. It has a malfunction of B10 instead of an X#, is repaired by a dr of 1 or 2, and is removed with a dr of 6. Σ

References

1. The PTRD & PTRS Anti-Tank Rifles by Chuck Madurski
<http://www.smallarmsreview.com/pdf/antitank.pdf>
2. <http://www.geocities.com/Augusta/8172/panzerfaust.htm>

SCW Primer

Here is a brief review of the steps associated with combat involving LATW's.

- 1) Determine the range to target.
- 2) Using the correct To Hit Table (either back of counter or C3 To Hit Table), find the appropriate column to determine the Basic TH#.
- 3) Apply all target and firer TH Determination DRM applicable to LATW to arrive at the Modified TH#. These are found on the C3 To Hit Table
- 4) Leaders may apply their modifier to the To Hit DR. However, the Leader may not direct any more fires during that phase.
- 5) Once a hit is scored on a vehicular target, resolve it using the HEAT To Kill Table (C7.33). If the hit is scored on personnel units, the appropriate IFT column is used [per weapon]. Note that personnel units may be attacked by LATW if they are behind a wall or in a building/rubble or pillbox. (C8.31)
- 6) Check for backblast effects if the LATW is fired from a bld/rubble or pillbox. C13.8
- 7) If the To Kill DR is successful (C7.33), use that DR to determine the extent of destruction to the AFV. This is found on table C7.7 AFV Destruction Table.



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Special thanks to Bill Pittman for providing the club and tournament photos contained in this newsletter.

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